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Testimony of City of Detroit Lansing Lobbyist Kenneth Cole

Before the Michigan Senate Transportation Committee

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Chairman Casperson; ... Distinguished members of the Senate Transportation Committee;
... Good afternoon and thank you for the opportunity to address you on Senate Bill 130.

My name is Kenneth Cole. I am a principal with Governmental Consultant Services Incorporated and the City of Detroit's lead lobbyist at the state Capitol.

On behalf of City of Detroit Mayor Dave Bing, the honorable Detroit City Council and the residents of Michigan's largest city, I first want to thank Senator Dave Hildenbrand for sponsoring this legislation.

As you know, Senate Bill 130 seeks to amend the Michigan Vehicle Code to permit a court to inform the Secretary of State when a person has failed to answer 3 or more regular parking violation notices or citations regarding illegal parking.

Currently, the law permits a court to so alert the Secretary of State only when a person has failed to respond to 6 or more such notices or citations.

The law goes on to instruct the Secretary of State to "*not issue ... or renew a license for the person*" until the individual has resolved "*all outstanding matters regarding the notices or citations.*"

Please know that **City of Detroit Mayor Dave Bing supports Senate Bill 130**, which, like municipal parking enforcement itself, seeks to augment public safety, customer service and personal responsibility.

Let me be clear: Parking citations are **self imposed**. They do not constitute a tax on recipients, but, rather, a sanction for parking improperly, illegally or too long in a space. Such violations can, thus, be avoided, and motorists who receive them should not be permitted to flout the law.

All too often, however, ignoring parking violation notices is what people choose to do. Such blatant defiance is especially true in the City of Detroit, which is owed an estimated \$30 million from unpaid parking citations issued over the past seven years.

That is money owed Detroit's general fund – resources the city most assuredly can use today as it grapples with a projected deficit of \$155 million that is fueled in part by sharp reductions in state support.

Indeed, as I speak, the Legislature is considering sharp reductions in the statutory revenue sharing program that could cut Detroit's FY 2012 appropriation by as much as \$70 million from the current-year level – a reduction that, undoubtedly, would have an adverse impact on city services.

Please understand, though, that parking enforcement – while admittedly a **source of revenue** for Michigan municipalities – is foremost about ensuring **public safety**.

Consider, for example, how vehicles parked too close to street corners often impede pedestrians' view of oncoming traffic, increasing their risks of involvement in an accident and amplifying a city's potential liability. That is especially true in dense localities like Detroit, which has an abundance of streets with multiple lanes and unorthodox angles.

Parking enforcement also hastens turnover of parking spaces and, by extension, promotes **customer service**. City halls, courts and commercial enterprises tend to be located in municipal downtowns. All day, people trek to and from those places to handle their affairs and need a reasonable guarantee they will find sufficient parking opportunities.

I could continue itemizing the merits of municipal parking enforcement but do not wish to belabor the point, and that is Senate Bill 130 is a good bill. Vote "yes." Support Michigan municipalities and our worthy mission of public service.

Again, thank you for your time and consideration of my remarks. I appreciate your forbearance and welcome any questions from the committee.